

## Of Demigods and Dark Knights

Presentation for the Joseph Smith Restoration Conference

By Jeremy Hoop

9 June, 2019

We adore our superheroes. Whether to Iron Man or Wonder Woman, we offer billions upon billions of dollars and countless hours as sacrifices to these comic demigods. I'm partial to the Dark Knight. Under that menacing Batsuit with all those wonderful toys, he's just a human after all. He's a billionaire crime-fighting tech-sauvant, but he gets angry, lonely, and haunted by his past. I'm not alone in preferring heroes that are more human than super, with enough blemishes to make me feel better about myself.

When we learn that Gandhi was quite the racist; when we hear allegations that Martin Luther King Jr. had 40 mistresses and laughed while watching a woman get raped, we struggle to reconcile these horrific reports with the lofty rhetoric and noble acts non-violent resistance. When Bill Cosby gets convicted of sexual assault; when the King of Pop is accused of molestation, we cringe and shake our heads and wonder if we'll actually never watch another delightful episode of The Cosby Show or moonwalk awkwardly to Billie Jean. But we're no longer surprised. Sadly, we've come to expect no more in this age of Deadpoolian anti-heros. There are no true men-of-steel anymore; if there ever were to begin with. Unless of course, you believe the scriptures revealed by Joseph Smith.

Joseph's revelations speak of a different order of heroes upon whose legends and archetypes the Egyptian, Greek, and Norse demigods would eventually be drawn. Individuals who entered this Order anciently, were inducted in by the Lord God Himself, and were given a portion of God's power over His creation. These were the Lord's anointed. Joseph Smith revealed that these ancients including Adam, Noah, and Abraham were given by God:

*...power, by faith, to break mountains, to divide the seas, to dry up waters, to turn them out of their course, to put at defiance the armies of nations, to divide the earth, to break every band, to stand in the presence of God, to do all things according to his will, according to his command subdue principalities and powers; and this by the will of the Son of God which was from before the foundation of the world.<sup>1</sup>*

Thus we have the few incredible tales of Enoch moving mountains, Moses dividing seas, and Elijah calling down fire from heaven--the stuff of demigods indeed. And yet, the number of demonstrations of supernatural prowess by these holy men is far smaller than miniscule number of individuals who possessed God's power. Of the estimated 108 billion humans who've inhabited this world, there are only dozens of named individuals in all of scriptures who ever were members of the Holy Order. And though they could, if God willed it, do greater supernatural feats than any Avenger, the primary signs identifying any one of the Holy Order come not in metaphysical displays but rather in the form of words: what they revealed; what they taught; and in demonstrations of

---

<sup>1</sup> Old Covenants Genesis 7:18-19 [LDS Scriptures JST Genesis 14]

how they served and sacrificed. The words and examples of Isaiah, Paul and King Benjamin come to mind. Speaking of this Holy Order, Joseph taught that:

*[it] is after the order of the Son of God...the channel through which the Almighty commenced revealing His glory at the beginning of the creation of the earth, and through which He has continued to reveal Himself to the children of men to the present time...and will make known His purposes to the end of time.<sup>2</sup>*

What kind of person would God trust with this channel, with His words, let alone His power? What kind of man would God call and elect into this Order? Would He trust a murderer? Would He reveal Himself to a thief? Would He confer His power on an adulterer? Would He anoint a liar? Unfortunately, anyone with the slightest understanding of the historical record who also hopes to “stay in the boat” of institutional Mormonism, is forced to believe that God indeed loves liars. Why? Because on May 26, 1844 in front of a large gathering of the Saints, Joseph, one who claimed to have been a member of the Holy Order, stood, having been accused of practicing spiritual wifery and made a lengthy and vigorous defense of himself saying: “*What a thing it is for a man to be accused of committing adultery, and having seven wives, when I can only find one.*”<sup>3</sup> The whole speech is well worth reading.

Joseph denied the practice and doctrine of polygamy, vociferously, in the strongest possible language. There is not a single instance of Joseph advocating polygamy. On the contrary, all of his recorded public and private statements denounced it. Arguably, in the last three years of his life, Joseph spent more time and effort trying to eradicate the practice of spiritual wifery and polygamy than he did on almost anything else, save preparing the Saints for the Temple. The Times and Seasons are full of his repudiation of the practice. The Nauvoo High Council minutes reveal his constant efforts to excommunicate any instances of spiritual wifery and polygamy. Interesting behavior from one who reportedly married between 20 and 50 women.

Of Joseph’s May 26, 1844 denial, and his many public and private actions, Joseph’s grandson, RLDS Patriarch Elbert A. Smith perhaps said it best:

*There is no halfway ground. Either Joseph Smith was true and clean, open and above board, as the Reorganized Church claims; or else he was a hypocrite and a fraud through and through, as his enemies claim.*

This is the quandary all believers in the Restoration face. It’s the fundamental question of Mormonism: did Joseph Smith tell the truth. I confess that for many years, I believed Joseph was a liar when I taught and defended what I understood was his practice of polygamy. I tacitly believed that God Himself countenanced, even commanded Joseph to lie. I hadn’t yet done the difficult work to reconcile Joseph’s alleged polygamy with what he revealed and taught on truth. Joseph said:

---

<sup>2</sup> TPJS 167

<sup>3</sup>[www.josephsmithpapers.org/paper-summary/history-1838-1856-volume-f-1-1-may-1844-8-august-1844/64](http://www.josephsmithpapers.org/paper-summary/history-1838-1856-volume-f-1-1-may-1844-8-august-1844/64)

*“Truth is ‘Mormonism.’ God is the author of it.”<sup>4</sup>...and...”One of the grand fundamental principles of Mormonism is to receive truth let it come from where it may.” Joseph revealed many scriptures on the subject of truth, including these words: “For the word of the Lord is truth, and whatsoever is truth is light, and whatsoever is light is Spirit, even the Spirit of Jesus Christ.”<sup>5</sup> And these words of the Brother of Jared: “Yea, Lord, I know that thou speakest the truth, for thou art a God of truth, and canst not lie.”*

6

Of liars, Joseph’s words offer only the strongest condemnation. Among those many revelations are the following: *“Wo unto the liar, for he shall be thrust down to hell.”*, and: *“Wherefore, I, the Lord, have said that the fearful, and the unbelieving, and all liars, and whosoever loveth and maketh a lie, and the whoremonger, and the sorcerer, shall have their part in that lake which burneth with fire and brimstone, which is the second death.”<sup>7</sup>* Joseph left himself no wiggle room whatsoever in those words and yet I still allowed the contradiction to persist.

However, as I have looked carefully at more of the available historical record, I have come to the conclusion it is impossible to square Joseph’s revelations, his recorded words and actions with the allegation that he practiced polygamy. The notion that he was a polygamist is wholly incongruent with Joseph also being a virtuous man. If he did as accused, he was also a rank adulterer, because he supposedly married single women like Fanny Alger and sent her away to marry another man with whom she bore nine children. He supposedly put away Sarah Ann Whitney and arranged for her to marry Joseph C. Kingsbury while Joseph was still alive. She would later marry Heber C. Kimball, bearing him seven children. Joseph allegedly married other men’s wives without their having been widowed or divorced. How is any of this consistent with the Lord’s own condemnation of divorce? How is it consistent with the alleged revelation on plural marriage. If Joseph did as accused, then he also flatly disobeyed the revelation he purportedly received. In section 132 of the LDS Doctrine and Covenants, you find no permission to marry other men’s wives, or to divorce or put away any existing wives. Though some apologists try, it is also very difficult to find the cultural and religious exemption for Joseph to marry and have sex with 14, 15 and 16-year-old girls, which is the allegation. Joseph supposedly attempted to hide many of the rumored marriages from Emma. How does that comport with the “Law of Sarah” that would give Emma the right to choose the wives and sanction the marriages?

I completely understand why so many people lose faith in the Restoration. Without exposure to more facts and available exculpatory evidence, it is far easier and frankly more intellectually and spiritually consistent to abandon Joseph altogether, than to attempt to reconcile these tremendous contradictions.

---

<sup>4</sup> History of the Church, 3:297 (20 March 1839)

<sup>5</sup> D&C 84:45

<sup>6</sup> 2 Nephi 9:34

<sup>7</sup> D&C 63:17

However, the closer I look at the record and at Joseph's works and words, I find no evidence that he did as accused. And though both apologists and antagonists alike scoff at such a notion, the historical record simply cannot convict him.

Today, I believe more than ever that Joseph was the Lord's anointed, a member of the Holy Order and that he told the truth. I believe it to be a serious offense to speak evil of the Lord's anointed. I have in the past spoken evil of Joseph and I will no longer do so. As a current active LDS Gospel Doctrine teacher, and as the great, great, great grandson of eight polygamist men, including LDS Apostle Erastus Snow who had at least sixteen wives, I am giving this talk as an act of public repentance. The lies, distortions, misunderstandings, and the practice of and belief in polygamy passed down by my ancestors will end with me. I offer these words as a testimony to my family that I will stand as an advocate for Joseph Smith and his character. Joseph spoke in the Nauvoo grove on May 29, 1842 and plead for the Saints to defend him. He said: "*Let...all who will support the character of the Prophet— the Lords anointed...if all who go, will support my character I prophecy in the name of the Lord Jesus, whose servant I am, that you will prosper in your missions.*"<sup>8</sup> I hope to merit the promise of that prophecy.

When examining Mormon history, we would do well to consider the following: Historical consensus is often dead wrong. Contrary to popular belief, Christopher Columbus didn't discover America. There were no witches burned at the stake in the Salem witch trials. George Washington didn't chop down a cherry tree, or have wooden teeth. VanGogh didn't cut his ear off and Thomas Edison didn't actually invent the light bulb. Scientists now say that the first Americans didn't come across the Behring land bridge and DNA testing did not actually prove Thomas Jefferson fathered of any of Sally Hemming's children. History relies on reports and recollections and humans are often bad at both. Memory science tells us memories are highly susceptible to degradation and outside suggestion, even when a record of the event is made immediately after. Collective false memories, a very real phenomenon, are given the name the Mandela Effect--because large numbers of people worldwide have a memory seared into their minds that Nelson Mandela died in the 1980s while in prison. Except he didn't. He died a free man in 2013. False accusations and the too frequent occurrence of false confessions leading to wrongful convictions are both highly relevant to Mormon history. Each of these points merits a lengthy discussion. We ought to be humble and cautious when pronouncing any certainties about history.

The primary narrative of Mormon history that's accepted by both the institutional apologists and the critics has been derived from two main sources: Joseph's contemporary enemies and the decades-after-the-fact recollections of Utah polygamists or Brighamites. But there is a competing and arguably far more compelling narrative that has largely been ignored. Both apologists and antagonists dismiss that story because on the one hand it doesn't support institutional claims to continuity of authority, and on the other hand it does not lend credence to the claim that Joseph was a fraud.

---

<sup>8</sup> Scott Faulring, 1987, *An American Prophet's Record: The Diaries and Journals of Joseph Smith*, pg 253.

It is beyond the scope of this talk to give adequate time to all of the points of the case that the apologists and critics are reluctant or refuse to discuss. That effort will be done in an upcoming podcast later this year. Here is a summary of what I believe should be considered:

There is no universal agreement among historians and authors on who exactly were Joseph's wives. The numbers range from the low twenties to over fifty. There is no *record* of Joseph saying anything on the subject of polygamy except to preach against it, proclaim his innocence, and excommunicate any who were preaching or practicing it. Joseph simply can't be connected to the purported "revelation" on plural marriage. All that exists is a copy of a copy of the revelation in the hand Joseph C. Kingsbury, not one of Joseph's scribes. William Clayton's original apparently was "destroyed". There is no way to verify if the stories of the "revelation" are true. Mormon historians attribute to both Joseph and Emma actions and attitudes for which the only corroboration are again, statements by Joseph's enemies, or belated tales by Utah polygamists. These include unfounded assertions that Joseph attempted to hide his activities from Emma and that Emma tried to prevent Joseph from living polygamy. They also include merciless slanders on Emma's character that have no basis in fact. She was accused by Brigham Young and others of, among many things: burning the original polygamy revelation; pushing Eliza Snow down a flight stairs, causing her to miscarry; and even trying to murder Joseph by poisoning him. But Emma remained consistent to her dying day that Joseph was innocent. She remains the greatest character witnesses in defense of Joseph. Mormonism is replete with tall tales that have no basis in fact and many of them have ties to polygamy and Joseph Smith.

An astonishing exculpatory incident occurred in 1842 when lawyer Chauncey L. Higbee used Joseph's name to seduce women into practicing spiritual wifery. Immediately, Joseph brought Chauncey before the Nauvoo High Council and had him excommunicated. But Joseph also took the dramatic step of suing Chauncey in open court in Nauvoo in October of that year, before Justice of the Peace Ebenezer Robinson, Brigham Young's brother-in-law, and later in the Hancock County Circuit Court at the county seat at Carthage. The case was called "The People vs. Chauncey Higbee". The trial was ultimately dismissed because Joseph was forced into hiding by the false accusations of John C. Bennet, inciting the Missouri extradition order of Joseph and Orrin Rockwell. Joseph's lawsuit begs the question: why would a guilty man put himself to such public scrutiny? Polygamy was crime in the state of Illinois. All it would have required for Chauncey to prevail would be to find one disgruntled sister, father, friend or neighbor of any of the purported seventeen wives that Joseph is alleged to have had by October of 1842. Why would Joseph take such a risk, unless he were innocent?

Perhaps the greatest evidence of Joseph's innocence is his character: what people said of him and what he said of others. His writings are full of the most generous and loving language toward his family and friends, and many people who knew him spoke and wrote of Joseph in most respectful and admiring words.

All of this having been said, Joseph's relationship to polygamy comes down to sex. Period. Did he or did he not have carnal relations with any other women besides Emma. If Joseph did not have sex

with the women, regardless of what else may have transpired, it was not polygamy. There does not exist a single contemporaneous source to establish proof of sexual relations between Joseph and anyone other than Emma. As Brian Hales, author of Joseph Smith's Polygamy and foremost compiler of pro-Joseph Smith-polygamy sourcing, rightly explains:

*None of these women left a specific record of how Joseph Smith explained the principle of plural marriage to them, the specific path they followed to come to an acceptance of the principal, or what exactly it meant to them in terms of their daily lives and activities.*<sup>9</sup>

The greatest evidence of sexual relations of course would be children. However, despite exhaustive efforts that began in the mid-1800s and have continued up until today, though many children were claimed, no children have been verified. Recent DNA testing has proven previous claims to be false. After explaining that: "*The Prophet was virile, having fathered nine children with Emma despite long periods of time apart and challenging schedules,*"<sup>10</sup> and that most of the alleged "wives" were quite fertile, Hales concedes: "*No children are known to have been born to Joseph and his plural wives.*"<sup>11</sup>

Still, Hales attempts to establish the evidence for sexual relations between Joseph and his "wives" with this remarkably equivocal language: "*Documenting sexual relations can be difficult, but it appears the prophet experienced sexual relations with less than half of the women sealed to him.*"<sup>12</sup> Since Hales and other authors concede the possibility that Joseph had some "wives" with whom there were no sexual relations, it's perplexing if not surprising that they entirely dismiss the idea that Joseph possibly had no sexual relations with any of the women.

Without being able to rely on any polygamous posterity linked to Joseph, Hales provides what he deems "evidence" of sexual relations for eleven of the women--for the rest he asserts there is little or no evidence of sexuality. For two of the women, he says the evidence is weak. He claims there is "moderate" evidence for carnal relations with six others; however, Hales relies entirely on decades old second and third party hearsay from Brighamite polygamists whose motivations Hales does not examine or acknowledge. In the case of Maria Lawrence, Hales relies on William Law who accused Joseph of being "in an open state of adultery", for which no proof at the time was ever proffered. Hales provides no first-hand accounts to establish what he calls evidence for this group of women.

For three of the women, Hales claims the evidence is strong. The primary source of "evidence" comes from the 1892 Temple Lot Case affidavits provided by Lucy Walker Kimball, Malissa Lot Willis, and Emily Partridge Dow Young. Nine of the supposed "wives" were living at the time, yet only three would provide testimony.

---

<sup>9</sup> Brian Hales, Joseph Smith's Polygamy, Volume 1, pg. 391

<sup>10</sup> josephsmithspolygamy.org/common-questions/plural-marriages-sexual/#NoChildrenfromPluralWives

<sup>11</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>12</sup> *ibid.*

Brian Hales writes: "In the Temple Lot suit, Lucy Walker admitted to conjugal relations with Joseph Smith"<sup>13</sup>. However, the transcript reveals that Lucy simply declines to answer<sup>14</sup> any direct questions rather than admit to any sexual relations or children.

In 1885, Joseph Smith III visited with Malissa Lott and her two sisters in Lehi, Utah. In his memoir, Joseph describes a touching scene with these three women who had been his childhood friends during their time in Nauvoo. He recounts their expressing deep affection and regard for his mother and father. He had a lengthy interview with Malissa about her relationship with his father the Prophet. When he asked "*Did you ever live with him as his wife anywhere?*" she said, beginning to cry: "*No, I never did; but you have no business asking me such questions. I had a great regard and respect for both your father and your mother. I do not like to talk about these things.*"<sup>15</sup>

Joseph concluded the following about Malissa's relationship with his father:

*The interview had convinced me that the statement made in an affidavit of this Melissa Lott Willis, published by Joseph F. Smith along with others of similar import, to the effect that she had been married to Joseph Smith, was not true, provided the word married be construed as conveying the right of living together as man and wife, a relation she had unequivocally denied in my presence. I was convinced that wherever the word married or sealed occurred in such testimonials regarding my father it meant nothing more than that possibly those women had gone through some ceremony or covenant which they intended as an arrangement for association in the world to come, and could by no means have any reference whatever to marital rights in the flesh.*<sup>16</sup>

In 1892 in her affidavit for the Temple Lot case, Malissa changed her story. Though not admitting explicitly to sexual relations, she answered that she had "roomed with Joseph Smith as his wife" "more than twice" in Nauvoo<sup>17</sup>. In 1893 Joseph Smith III returned to Utah to interview Malissa. Joseph asked her: "Were you married to my father?" She replied: "Yes" He asked: "Was you a wife in very deed?" She answered: "Yes" He asked: "Why was there no increase, say in your case?" She said: "Through no fault of either of us, lack of proper conditions on my part probably, or it might be in the wisdom of the Almighty that we should have none. The Prophet was martyred nine months after our marriage."<sup>18</sup> We are left to decide when she was telling the truth.

The final "evidence", and the only direct "admission" of sexuality comes from Emily Dow Partridge in her 1892 Temple Lot case affidavit. After a series of conflicting answers related to her relations with Joseph Smith, a lawyer asked Emily: "Did you ever have carnal intercourse with Joseph Smith?" She answered: "Yes sir." "How many nights?" "I could not tell you." "Do you make the declaration

---

<sup>13</sup> [josephsmithspolygamy.org/common-questions/plural-marriages-sexual/lucy-walker-evidence-of-sexuality](http://josephsmithspolygamy.org/common-questions/plural-marriages-sexual/lucy-walker-evidence-of-sexuality)

<sup>14</sup> Lucy Walker Kimball, Deposition, Temple Lot Transcript, pp. 371-379

<sup>15</sup> Joseph Smith III, *The Memoirs of President Joseph Smith III (1832-1914)*, pp. 245-246

<sup>16</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>17</sup> Malissa Lott, deposition, Temple Lot Transcript, Part 3, pp. 97, 105-6, questions 87-93, 224-60

<sup>18</sup> Melissa Lott Willes, statement, August 4, 1893, CHL

that you ever slept with him but one night?" "Yes sir." "And that was the only time and place that you ever were in bed with him?" "No sir."

Oddly enough, the Temple Lot affidavit was the very first time she had mentioned such a thing for which we have any record. She makes no mention of living as husband and wife with Joseph in her 1877 memoirs or anywhere else. Interestingly, she tells of being married to Joseph twice. The first time she remarks that she went home by herself right after the ceremony, calling it "odd". The second time she said she had the blessing of Emma, but that Emma watched her and her sister Eliza like a hawk, never leaving her alone with Joseph. Emma, she says, would soon send both of them away.

The Judge in the Temple Lot Case, Judge John F. Phillips, found these women to be less than truthful. In his Decision, he stated:

*It perhaps would be uncharitable to say of these women that they have borne false testimony as to their connection with Joseph Smith; but, in view of all the evidence and circumstances surrounding the alleged intercourse, it is difficult to escape the conclusion that at most they were but sports in "nest hiding."<sup>19</sup>*

"Lying for the Lord" is a well known idiom in connection with Brighamite Mormonism and *ought to weigh* into any consideration of the veracity of any reports coming from that people. It should be recognized that this concept has no verifiable connection to Joseph Smith. He never countenanced lying but always advocated honesty and truth. Historian D. Michael Quinn points out that in late 19th century Mormondom, arguments were published in the *Deseret Evening News* and in B.H. Roberts biography of John Taylor:

*...that if apostles (and by implication, any Latter-day Saints) were under a divine command or covenant of secrecy which one of the apostles violated by telling others, that those who maintained the sacred covenant of secrecy would be justified in, even obligated to, denouncing the disclosures as false.<sup>20</sup>*

In October of 1844, in response to Sidney Rigdon's direct accusations<sup>21</sup>, "*that the Twelve and their adherents have endeavored to carry on this spiritual wife business in secret*", LDS Apostle John Taylor made a fierce public denial in the *Times and Seasons*<sup>22</sup>, although he had already begun taking plural wives at that point. While in France in 1850, Taylor, in a public debate over polygamy accusations gave a lengthy denial, stating emphatically in part:

*I proved Mr. Caswell to have told one lie, and a man that will tell one falsehood to injure an innocent people, will tell five hundred, if necessary, for the same object....We are accused here*

---

<sup>19</sup> Judge John F. Phillips, Decision, Temple Lot Case

<sup>20</sup> [www.dialoguejournal.com/wp-content/uploads/sbi/articles/Dialogue\\_V18N01\\_11.pdf](http://www.dialoguejournal.com/wp-content/uploads/sbi/articles/Dialogue_V18N01_11.pdf)

<sup>21</sup> Messenger and Advocate 1 [October 15, 1844]: 14

<sup>22</sup> Times and Seasons 5 [November 15, 1844]: 715



*of polygamy, and actions the most indelicate, obscene, and disgusting, such that none but a corrupt and depraved heart could have contrived...I shall content myself by reading our views of chastity and marriage, from a work published by us, containing some of the articles of our Faith. "Doctrine and Covenants," page 330.*<sup>23</sup>

Taylor had as many as fifteen wives at the time. In 1864, Taylor admitted why he had lied while in France to RLDS Apostle E. C. Briggs explaining he had made: *"a 'prudential statement;' for if he had owned himself a polygamist, which he was at the time, he would have been driven out of France, and so cut off his usefulness in that country. "What! Mr. Taylor tell a lie," said E. C. Briggs. "Yes," said the former, "under the circumstances it was justifiable..."*<sup>24</sup>

In 1848, Catherine Lewis, a convert to the Church, published a "Narrative, of some of the Proceedings of the Mormons". In her expose, she recounts her introduction to Mormonism and in particular her introduction to polygamy. She describes first hearing of the plurality of wives taught by an unnamed Mormon Elder in 1843 in Boston. The teachings were accompanied by the Elder cautioning her to "not to tell this conversation".<sup>25</sup> Ms. Lewis goes on to describe that she was then recruited by Augusta Adams Cobb Young, Brigham Young's second plural wife who encouraged Catherine to accept "the word of the Lord", "receive her full Endowment", and marry Heber C. Kimball, Brigham Young, or one of several other authorities in the Church. Catherine refused. Mrs. Cobb warned her to keep their communications secret:

*'If you tell any one that I have told you these things, I will deny it, and throw the lie on you.' This I thought was a jest, at first, but I soon learned they were commanded to lie, if they were exposed; and they seek any opportunity when no other person is present, to teach this doctrine, which, if divulged, they must deny.*<sup>26</sup>

There are many unresolved contradictions concerning when the revelation on plural marriage was received. In her Temple Lot affidavit, Emily Partridge Dow Young tells that she learned of the plural marriage revelation in March of 1843 and when the lawyer asked her to explain how she was *"married to Joseph Smith in March when the revelation wasn't given until July, 1843;" She replied: "Well, I do not know anything about that".*<sup>27</sup> Lucy Walker, in her Temple Lot affidavit, gave a different dates. After first saying it was revealed in 1831, although she hadn't met Joseph until spring 1841, she corrected her statement saying: *"I saw that revelation at our house in Nauvoo, in 1842; it was in writing; I mean it was not written to present to the church. It was written later than that. Of course it was written when I saw it in 1842; that is, it was in manuscript. Of course I am sure it was the one on plural marriage, just as positive of that as anything else I have sworn to; there is no doubt about it at*

---

<sup>23</sup> John Taylor, Three Nights' Public Discussion Between The Revds. C W. Cleeve, James Robertson, and Philip Cater, and Elder John Taylor of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, At Boulogne-Sur-Mer, France [Liverpool, Great Britain, 1850], 4

<sup>24</sup> Jason W. Briggs, *The Messenger* 2 [Salt Lake City, Utah, April 1876]: 22

<sup>25</sup> Catherine Lewis, Narrative, of some of the Proceedings of the Mormons, Giving an Account of Their Iniquities; pg. 6; 1848

<sup>26</sup> Emily Dow Partridge Young, Deposition, Temple Lot Transcript, pp. 363-364

<sup>27</sup> Lucy Walker Kimball, Deposition, Temple Lot Transcript, pp. 371-379

all."<sup>28</sup> Brigham Young, Heber C. Kimball, and William Clayton all gave differing accounts of how and when the revelation came forward.

When examining the motives of the Brighamites and the context of any of their statements or actions, an important consideration is the concept of Kingship and Queenship. While Governor of Utah, Brigham had himself anointed a "King, Priest and Ruler over Israel". He declared in General Conference in 1851: "All things will have to bow to Mormonism or eternal light and truth. We have the true government of all the earth". Brigham Young, Heber C. Kimball and the rest of the leaders and fully endowed members of Mormonism considered themselves Kings and Priests unto the Most High God, and that their earthly Kingdom would literally subdue all other kingdoms on the earth. Heber Kimball even referred to Brigham as his "savior". Their wives were anointed Queens and Priestesses unto the most High God. Through receiving their Endowments and especially their Second Anointing, they all had their "callings and elections made sure", they were pronounced Gods and Goddesses on the earth, were promised Eternal Life, and were told there was no sin they could commit that would derail their exaltation, save the shedding of innocent blood or the sin against the Holy Ghost.

Another important consideration is the fact that after Joseph died, a systematic effort was undertaken by Brigham Young to revise the official history of the Church. He admitted on April 1, 1845: "I commenced revising the History of Joseph Smith at Brother Richard's office: Elder Heber C. Kimball and George A. Smith were with me."<sup>29</sup> In October of 1845, William Smith reported in the Warsaw Signal: "that Brigham Young, John Taylor, and Willard Richards with the appointed bishops have assumed the publishing of the Church Documents, the Book of Covenants, and also Joseph's private history, as their own property entirely regardless of the rights of the Smith family as therewith connected."<sup>30</sup> Richard Van Wagoner has further shown the extensive nature of the historical revisions made by Brigham Young:

*That this revision, or censorship, of the official history came from Brigham Young is evidenced by an 11 July 1856 reference in Wilford Woodruff's diary. Apostle Woodruff, working in the church historian's office, questioned Young respecting a 'p[ie]ce of History on Book E-1 page 1681-2 concerning Hyr[u]m leading this Church & tracing the [A]aronic Priesthood.' Young advised, '[I]t was not essential to be inserted in the History & had better be omitted.'...Years later Elder Charles W. Penrose, a member of the First Presidency, admitted that after Joseph Smith's death some changes were made in the official record 'for prudential reasons.'...Charles Wesley Wandell, an assistant church historian, was aghast at these emendations. Commenting on the many changes made in the historical work as it was being serialized in the Deseret News, Wandell noted in his diary: 'I notice the interpolations because having been employed in the Historian's office at Nauvoo by Doctor Richards, and employed, too, in 1845, in compiling this very autobiography, I know that after Joseph's death his memoir was 'doctored' to suit the*

---

<sup>28</sup> Lucy Walker Kimball, Deposition, Temple Lot Transcript, Part 3, pp. 371-379

<sup>29</sup> Salt Lake City: Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1902), 7:389; here-after HC. For other references regarding revisions, see *ibid.*, 389-90, 408, 411, 414, 427-28, 514, 519, 520, 532, 533, 556.

<sup>30</sup> By William Smith, published in full in the Warsaw Signal, October 29, 1845, Vol. II, No. 32.

*new order of things, and this, too, by the direct order of Brigham Young to Doctor Richards and systematically by Richards.’ The Quorum of the Twelve, under Brigham Young’s leadership, began altering the historical record shortly after Smith’s death. Contrary to the introduction’s claim, Smith did not author the History of the Church.”*

It should be noted that the brand of polygamy practiced by Brigham Young and his followers extended well beyond the bounds of the purported revelation. According to John D. Lee it included the exchange of wives:

*In the Winter of 1845 meetings were held all over the city of Nauvoo, and the spirit of Elijah was taught in the different families as a foundation to the order of celestial marriage, as well as the law of adoption...Some have mutually agreed to exchange wives and have been sealed to each other as husband and wife by virtue and authority of the holy priesthood. One of Brigham’s brothers, Lorenzo Young, now a bishop, made an exchange of wives with Mr. [Isaac] Decker.... They both seemed happy in the exchange of wives.<sup>31</sup>*

In October 1861 General Conference, Brigham Young taught that women could leave faithful husbands without divorcing them if they could find a man with higher priesthood authority who would take them. Brigham practiced this and had children with some of the women who followed his counsel. Other than the word of Brigham Young and other Brighamites, this astonishing doctrine has no verifiable connection to Joseph Smith. Neither do the doctrines of Adam God, denying priesthood to those of African descent, or blood atonement. Brigham taught openly and often that: “it is the greatest blessing that could come to some men to shed their blood on the ground, and let it come up before the Lord as an atonement.”

Many in Nauvoo reported threats of violence. In 1845, William Smith reported he was cautioned by one of the Nauvoo police to “look out for my life”. Catherine Lewis reported that when she met Brigham Young, that he carried two pistols on his hip that he named, “the defence of the gospel, or the preparation for the peace of the gospel.” When she refused to marry Heber or Brigham, she felt she had to flee Nauvoo and stated later: “it is my firm opinion, had they known my exact departure, means would have been used to way-lay, or otherwise maltreat me, in order to prevent my escape.”

<sup>32</sup> William Smith also stated in 1857: “I have good reason for believing that my brother Samuel H. Smith, died of poison at Nauvoo, administered by order of Brigham Young and Willard Richards, only a few weeks subsequent to the unlawful murder of my other brothers, Joseph and Hiram Smith, while incarcerated in Carthage jail...Several other persons who were presumed to stand between Brigham Young and the accomplishment of his ambitions and wicked designs, mysteriously disappeared from Nauvoo about the same time, and have never been heard from since.”<sup>33</sup> Samuel Smith’s wife Levira and daughter Mary also believed and stated that Samuel was

---

<sup>31</sup> John D. Lee, *Mormonism Unveiled; or The Life and Confessions of the Late Mormon Bishop*, John D. Lee [St. Louis: Bryan, Brand and Company, 1887], 165

<sup>32</sup> Catherine Lewis, *Narrative*

<sup>33</sup> William Smith, “Mormonism,” letter to the “New York Tribune,” 28 May 1857

murdered by poisoning. The murder of Arvine Hodge outside of Brigham's home in 1845 and the persistent menacing presence of the "Whitling and Whistling Brigade" patrolling the streets of Nauvoo while openly brandishing their bowie knives all added to many feeling afraid for their safety while at Nauvoo. The massacre by Utah Mormons at Mountain Meadows of over one hundred twenty men, women and children and other subsequent killings were the full manifestation of the culture of blood atonement taught by Brigham Young.

Given the volume of well documented lies among the Brighamites, the pervasive culture of violence, the aberrant sexual practices that went well beyond polygamy, and the other innovative doctrines promulgated by Brigham Young and his followers, ought we not examine with greater scrutiny the decades old Brighamite recollections that claim polygamy originated with Joseph Smith?

As to how polygamy actually began, there is far greater evidence that it was introduced by Brigham Young, Heber C. Kimball and other members of the Twelve Apostles. Here is what we know from the historical record. While on missions to the eastern states, Brigham Young and others of the Apostles spent considerable time among members of a sect known as the Cochranites which had congregations in Saco Maine, Boston and New York. The Cochranites were well known for practicing spiritual wifery, open sexuality, the exchange of wives, washing of the feet and strict oaths of secrecy. The Mormon apostles, starting with Orson Hyde and Samuel Smith in 1832, made many converts among the Cochranites, enough to hold General Conferences in Saco Maine in 1835 and 1836. Brigham Young was in attendance at these conferences. Brigham would later take as his second plural wife in November of 1843 a former Cochranite woman named Augusta Adams Cobb, the same woman who would later attempt to recruit Catherine Lewis into polygamy. At the time of her marriage to Brigham, Augusta was still married to her husband Henry Cobb. How much a part Cochranism played on Brigham's particular brand of spiritual wifery is impossible to say, however the connections and similarities should at least be acknowledged.

Brigham would tell slightly different stories of how he learned of the doctrine of plural marriage. Interestingly, Brigham admits that he did not learn it from Joseph. In June of 1865 Brigham had a conversation with soon to be US Vice President, Schuyler Colfax who reported Brigham brought up the subject of polygamy and stated,

*"... the revelations of the Doctrine and Covenants declared for monogamy, but that polygamy was a later revelation commanded by God to him and a few others, and permitted and advised to the rest of the church."<sup>34</sup>*

In July 1869, both the New York Times and the Chicago Tribune reported that Brigham said: "Until we came [to Utah] the subject of polygamy was not broached. It was not until we had a revelation on the subject."<sup>35</sup> Also in 1869, the New York Times reported Brigham stating: "*As to our institutions, we know we are right, and polygamy, which you object to, was not originally a part of our system, but was*

---

<sup>34</sup> See Schuyler Colfax's Journal, as quoted in The Western Galaxy, Vol. I, p. 247, which published a series of articles from writings in his Journal

<sup>35</sup> *New York Times, 14 July, 1869, as reprinted from the Sunday, July 11, 1869, edition of the Chicago Tribune).*

adopted by us as a necessity after we came [to Utah]”.<sup>36</sup> In 1874, Brigham told the Deseret News another version of the story:

*While we were in England, (in 1839 and 40) I think, the Lord manifested to me by vision and his Spirit, things [concerning polygamy] that I did not then understand. I never opened my mouth to any one concerning them, until I returned to Nauvoo; Joseph had never mentioned this; there had never been a thought of it in the Church that I ever knew anything about at that time, but I had this for myself, and I kept it to myself.”<sup>37</sup>*

Brigham would change the story again, later stating that the revelation first came to Joseph in 1829, although how would Brigham know since he wasn’t baptized until 1832?

Evidence that Brigham and others did indeed know of polygamy or spiritual wifery while in England comes from a number of peculiar entries in the journal William Clayton. Clayton was married to Ruth Moon in 1836 and then baptized into the church by Heber C. Kimball in 1837. In 1840, after Brigham Young had joined the England mission, William records the following in his journal (keep in mind that he is at this time married to Ruth)

*On April 6, 1840: ...got home at 11 o clock S with S & R- they gave me a pint of Porter. Sarah washed my feet. [the rest of the entry is scratched out]. On April 9, 1840: ...she gave me a glass of Porter. I got to M about 11 o clock nearly through- Sarah had some egg milk ready & she washed my feet & I then went to bed...[the rest redacted] On April 22, 1840: Sarah Crooks went with me preached at Worsley... we got home about 1 o clock took S with H Walker - sis Poole washed my feet S. Crooks gave me an orange [the rest redacted].<sup>38</sup>*

This pattern repeats for four more entries with the end of each entry again having been redacted. In multiple entries he’s meeting with two women. It’s impossible to tell exactly what’s going on. However, none of the women Clayton is spending time with alone, at odd hours, often at night, while sharing alcohol, is his wife Ruth. Sarah Crooks is the primary woman mentioned, a woman William later write about in his journal expressing his desire for her and still later would attempt unsuccessfully to make his plural wife. The practice of washing feet, an established Cochranite practice, happens night after night. The redactions after each entry are peculiar and certainly are in keeping with Cochranite and later Mormon secrecy oaths made in connection with polygamy. We’ll never know what happened with William and these women, but the odd nature of these journal entries and their connection with Cochranism should be noted.

In 1877, former secretary to Brigham Young, Mark Forscutt, who had left the Utah Mormons, visited Emma Smith Bidamon in Nauvoo. He recorded in his diary that Emma told him Joseph said: “*I would pity the people that should follow Brigham as a leader,” and that “[Brigham] would lead the [Saints]*

---

<sup>36</sup> See sixth paragraph of article, “Brigham Young—A Somewhat Different Version of His Conversation with Senator Trumbull, New York Times, July 26, 1869

<sup>37</sup> Brigham Young: Deseret News, July 1, 1874

<sup>38</sup> William Clayton Journal

to hell." She also related that after Brigham came into power in Nauvoo, she had confronted him about his teaching of spiritual wifery which he denied. She said to him: "Why, Brigham you need not talk like that; you know these things are done. It is so plain, that even a stranger can not come and walk through our streets without witnessing it. You know too that Joseph in my presence told you that you had been teaching such things while he was alive, and that he commanded you in the name of the Lord, to teach them no more, or judgments would overtake you."<sup>39</sup>

In 1845 William Smith published a scathing expose, "A Proclamation" on the practice of polygamy in Nauvoo, laying the blame for the plural wife system at the feet of Brigham and the Twelve. In 1879, William published in the Saints Herald the following remarkable account:

*In relating her report [Emma] said that some complaint had been made to her by females whom she had visited, that John Taylor, Willard Richards, and Brigham Young had been teaching some doctrines among the Saints privately that was going to ruin the Church, unless there was a stop put to it, as it was contrary to the law and rules governing the Church. [Joseph] remarked that he would attend to the matter as soon as he got through with his troubles with the Laws and Fosters. But mark you their conversation took place only a few days previous to your father's death...One other point I wish to notice in the conversation that took place while I was eating at [Joseph's] table, and that was, as the conversation turned upon Brigham Young, [Joseph] remarked that with regard to the charges brought against these brethren, that he expected that he would have trouble with Brigham Young, especially, and added that "should the time ever come that this man B. Young should lead the Church that he would lead it to hell."<sup>40</sup>*

There were reports that Brigham Young was committing adultery while in England in 1840. English convert to the church, and later RLDS Seventy, Thomas Stafford was in England during Brigham's first mission there. He reported the following in 1891:

*...[in] 1840 and 1841. Elizabeth Mayer is the person with whom Brigham was then committing adultery. My reasons are these: We lived next door to her, under the same roof... This Elizabeth Mayer had a father and a brother who were gardeners; they took their dinners, as they worked a long piece from home. After they had left for work, Brigham would step into the house, she would then lock the door and pull down the blinds and curtains, which to me was strange. He never came to see our folks, although not five steps apart; and when he left he was always in a hurry, and she never came to the door with him when he was leaving...This same thing occurred in Nauvoo with a woman and Brigham. Her name was Greenough; her son was about my age, was always driven out when Brigham came, the door was shut and the curtains lowered. I was puzzled to know why he acted so, if he had a good heart, and was engaged in the business of teaching the truth, why drive the boy out? Why not come also and see my*

---

<sup>39</sup> Mark Forscutt's Diary, pages 81-82

<sup>40</sup> The Saints Herald, Official publication of the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, Vol. 26., No. 8, Plano, Ill., April 15, 1879

*mother, only a few steps apart? I am now, and was then, satisfied that he was in adultery, in Manchester, England. The seeds of polygamy was sown, and Brigham the sower.*<sup>41</sup>

Other extensive statements by William Marks, Mary Page (wife of LDS Apostle John Page) and Sydney Rigdon echo these previous quotes.

Because neither Joseph nor Emma said or recorded anything about what he was doing, it is impossible, without divine revelation to know exactly what went on. There are however, indications that Joseph was practicing something involving sealing and adoption that first began with sealing women and their families to himself and later sealing men and their families to himself.

Joseph left only a small hint of what he was endeavoring to do and he indicated in many of his revelations and public statements that he had received more from heaven than he ever revealed to the Saints. On January 20, 1844 he said:

*I have tried for a number of years to get the minds of the Saints prepared to receive the things of God; but we frequently see some of them, after suffering all they have for the work of God, will fly to pieces like glass as soon as anything comes that is contrary to their traditions*<sup>42</sup>

In 1843, Joseph mentions the idea of “adoption” for the first time in a brief journal entry.<sup>43</sup> On January 21, 1844, Wilford Woodruff records Joseph saying: “I would to God that this temple was now done that we might go into it & go to work & improve our time & make use of the seals while they are on earth”.<sup>44</sup> Then on March 10, 1844 Wilford again records Joseph’s words. He spoke on the Spirit of Elias, Elijah & Messiah. Joseph said: “if you have power to seal on earth & in heaven then we should be Crafty...[and]...seal on earth your sons & daughters unto yourself, & yourself unto your fathers in eternal glory...seal all you can.”<sup>45</sup>

The Case of Sarah Ann Whitney is often used to establish a contemporary source for Joseph’s sexual exploits. However, an examination of the available facts related to Sarah and Joseph reveal no evidence of sexual relations, but do indicate some exercise of sealing of both Sarah and her parents to Joseph. In the Fall of 1842, Joseph was in hiding due to the extradition order from the Governor of Missouri. From his journals, we learn that Joseph was considerably anxious about his and his family’s safety at the time. He was also concerned he and Emma were being watched. Emma visited Joseph while in hiding on August 16, 1842. It’s from this meeting that Joseph expresses his love for her in his journal writing: “Oh what a commingling of thought filled my mind for the moment, again she is here, even in the seventh trouble, undaunted, firm, and unwavering, unchangeable, affectionate

---

<sup>41</sup> R. C. Evans, Autobiography of Elder R. C. Evans, 334–335

<sup>42</sup> TPJS, 331

<sup>43</sup> JS Papers, Journals, Vol. 3, 15 October 1843, p. 114

<sup>44</sup> Ehat, Words of Joseph Smith, p. 317

<sup>45</sup> WJS - March 10 1844 at Temple Wilford Woodruff Journal

*Emma.*<sup>46</sup> After their meeting Emma writes to him that she “*dare not run too much of a risk*” to come and see him again for fear of being followed and having Joseph’s hiding place discovered.<sup>47</sup>

In her 1869 affidavit, Sarah Ann Whitney, asserts that she and Joseph were married just a few weeks earlier on July 27, 1842. Joseph mentions nothing of this or of Sarah in his journal. We do have a letter in Joseph’s own handwriting, not to Sarah, but to her parents on August 18, 1842 wherein Joseph requests that Newel, Elizabeth and Sarah meet him at the home of Carlos Graingers where he is in hiding. While cynical authors attempt to use this letter to conclude that Joseph was anxious to have Elizabeth and Newel facilitate a sexual rendezvous with their daughter Sarah, Joseph states that he wants to meet with all three of them in a private room--which would make for an interesting romantic encounter indeed, if Joseph’s interest were sexual in nature. The letter makes it apparent that Joseph wanted to accomplish something with Sarah and her parents that involved the “*fulness of my blessings sealed upon our heads*”. When he mentions: “*the only thing to be careful of; is to find out when Emma comes then you cannot be safe*”, he is not attempting to conceal the relationship from Emma, as critics assert, but rather cautioning the Whitney’s because Emma and the Smith household were being watched in order to discover Joseph’s location. Joseph asking them to “*burn this letter as soon as you read it, keep all locked up in your breasts, my life depends upon it*” was another attempt to preserve his hiding place and his life.<sup>48</sup>

We get a further indication of what Joseph was doing with the Whitney family when he gave Sarah a blessing on March 23, 1843. The blessing in Joseph’s own handwriting reads as follows:

*Oh Lord my God thou that dwellest on high bless I beseech of thee the one into whose hands this may fall and crown her with a diadem of glory in the Eternal worlds Oh let <it> be Sealed this day on high that She Shall come forth in the first reserrection to recieve the Same and verily it Shall be so Saith the Lord if She remain in the Everlasting covenant to the end as also all her Fathers house Shall be Saved in the Same Eternal glory and if any of them Shall wander from the fold of the Lord they Shall not perish but Shall return Saith the Lord and be Saved in and by repentance be crowned with all the fullness of the glory of the Everlasting gospel these promises I Seal upon all of their heads in the name of Jesus Christ by the Law of the holy preisthood Even so Amen - Joseph Smith<sup>49</sup>*

This is certainly corroboration of Joseph Smith III’s conclusion that whatever “marriage” or “sealing” was taking place, “*it meant nothing more than that possibly those women had gone through*

---

<sup>46</sup> DJS Faulring Aug 16 1842 pg 246]

<sup>47</sup>Emma Smith, *Letter from Emma Smith, 16 August 1842*;  
<https://www.josephsmithpapers.org/paper-summary/letter-from-emma-smith-16-august-1842/1>

<sup>48</sup> Joseph Smith, *Letter to Newel K., Elizabeth Ann, and Sarah Ann Whitney, 18 August 1842*  
<https://www.josephsmithpapers.org/paper-summary/letter-to-newel-k-elizabeth-ann-and-sarah-ann-whitney-18-august-1842/1>

<sup>49</sup>Joseph Smith, *Blessing to Sarah Ann Whitney, 23 March 1843*;  
<https://www.josephsmithpapers.org/paper-summary/blessing-to-sarah-ann-whitney-23-march-1843/1>



*some ceremony or covenant which they intended as an arrangement for association in the world to come.*"<sup>50</sup>

Attempts to imitate what Joseph began doing with sealings and adoptions appear in journals and memoirs of some of the Saints after Joseph's death. Joseph C. Kingsbury reported in his journal that he was sealed by Brigham Young to "Bishop [Newel] Whitney as his Son on the 27 Jany 1846" and that his two wives Dorcas and Loenza were sealed to Newel as [Newel's] Daughters & then to himself as wives. These sealings were done in preparation for him to receive his "Second Anointing With my Two Wives under the Hands of President Orson Pratt".<sup>51</sup> Likewise, John D. Lee wrote that "this doctrine [of adoption] extends much further. All persons are required to be adopted to some of the leading men of the Church. In this, however, they have the right of choice, thus forming the links of the chain of priesthood back to the father, Adam, and so on to the second coming of the Messiah."<sup>52</sup> This practice of sealing and adoption changed throughout the rest of the 19th century and eventually died out. When I was young, adoption was only taught in the LDS Church in connection with being baptized as a convert into the church and sealing was only connected with the Temple ordinance of marriage. Any teaching or practice of being sealed to Joseph Smith and to the "fathers in eternal glory" has been lost from institutional Mormonism and the only teaching of adoption on lds.org has reference with the practice of legally adopting children.

Before Brigham and most of the Twelve would implement polygamy as a sacrament of Utah Mormonism, the Lord told Joseph in May of 1831: "*Behold, I, the Lord, have looked upon you, and have seen abominations in the church that profess my name. But wo unto them that are deceivers and hypocrites, for, thus saith the Lord, I will bring them to judgment.*"<sup>53</sup> In September of that same year, the Lord again told Joseph: "*And liars and hypocrites shall be proved by them, and they who are not apostles and prophets shall be known.*"<sup>54</sup> These abominations were known by some after Joseph's death, but had been mostly forgotten until recently. They that were the true deceivers and hypocrites and they who were never apostles and prophets are being made known again today.

If Joseph told the truth, his final words of his final General Conference address on April 7th, 1844: "*You don't know me; you never knew my heart. No man knows my history...*"<sup>55</sup> take on a new meaning, and the restoration takes on a far different complexion.

If Joseph told the truth, his final three recorded dreams reveal a different picture of the fate of the restoration: a dream Joseph related in early 1844 of large boat sunk by huge waves, all on board lost, except Joseph and Samuel who are miraculously saved; another dream told on the way to Carthage of a ship on fire, but Joseph, Hyrum, and Samuel swim to safety; and finally on Joseph's

---

<sup>50</sup> Ibid.

<sup>51</sup> Kingsbury, Joseph C. . The History of Joseph C Kingsbury

<sup>52</sup> John D. Lee, Mormonism Unveiled; or The Life and Confessions of the Late Mormon Bishop, John D. Lee, St. Louis: Bryan, Brand and Company, 1887, 165

<sup>53</sup> D&C 64:39

<sup>54</sup> D&C 50:4, 6

<sup>55</sup> TPJS

final night, a dream of his old farm and a dilapidated barn which Joseph no longer wanted, leaving it to be taken over by violent, degenerate men. Perhaps his dreams are telling us something.

In the end, if we can believe Joseph Smith told the truth, we will see that he revealed, preached and practiced a fundamentally different, far more glorious, and infinitely more ennobling faith than most people, especially most of those who claim to be his followers, comprehend.

Yes, I admit to feeling much more comfortable with my deeply flawed antiheroes. I may always identify far more with Batman than Superman; far more with Superman than Apollo or the sons of Zeus and more with them even than I do with Moses, Enoch or any of the sons of God. But why should I need those of the Holy Order to be flawed as I or guilty of great and malignant sins? The ancients upon which all of the demigods and superheros are based came with a singular purpose. As Alma explained:

*those priests were ordained after the order of his Son, in a manner that thereby the people might know in what manner to look forward to his Son for redemption...And thus being called by this holy calling, and ordained unto the high priesthood of the holy order of God, to teach his commandments unto the children of men, that they also might enter into his rest.*<sup>56</sup>

Joseph fits that description perhaps better than anyone in recorded history, if we can just believe he told the truth. Thank you.

[By Jeremy Hoop, v1.0]

---

<sup>56</sup> Alma 13:2, 6